

CD 2009--51/52
p.1-8



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Chamber Music Series

Toronto Wind Quintet
With guests

"Petite Offrande Musicale"

Monday, March 30, 2009
7:30 pm. Walter Hall



Program

Petite Offrande Musicale, for wind quintet

Nino Rota
(1911-1979)

Mládi ("Youth"), for wind sextet

Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Vivace
Allegro animato

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

- INTERMISSION -

Divertissement for oboe, clarinet and bassoon

Prelude
Allegretto assai
Elégie
Scherzo

Jean Françaix
(1912-1997)

Septet for wind instruments

Lebhaft
Intermezzo. Sehr langsam, frei
Variationen. Mässig schnell
Intermezzo. Sehr langsam
Fuge. Alter Berner Marsch. Schnell

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Douglas Stewart, flute
Clare Scholtz, oboe
Stephen Pierre, clarinet
Joseph Orlowski, bass clarinet
Kathleen McLean, bassoon
Barton Woomert, trumpet
Harcus Hennigar, horn

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Program Notes

NINO ROTA (1911-1979)

Petite Offrande Musicale (1943), for wind quintet

Italian composer Nino Rota left a large legacy of film scores, many of which endure internationally in such classics as the first two parts of Coppola's *The Godfather*, Visconti's *The Leopard*, Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Fellini's *La strada*, *La dolce vita* and *Casanova*. A prolific composer, with a 30-year association with Federico Fellini, Rota scored music for more than 150 movies in all. Many of them are said to draw on an equally large output of music for the theatre and concert hall. This includes a dozen operatic works, many ballets and much incidental music, a large quantity of symphonies, concertos, vocal works and chamber music. The short *Petite Offrande Musicale* for wind quintet was published by Leduc in Paris in 1943, hence the French title by which it is generally known, in preference to the Italian *Piccola offerta musicale*. A pastoral opening and closing frame a perky, thoroughly idiomatic, quicker middle section. Rota dedicated the piece to composer Alfredo Casella, with whom he studied as a child prodigy, in Rome.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK (1854-1928)

Mládí ("Youth"), for wind sextet (1924)

Janáček's 70th birthday celebrations in 1924 were a time of great activity and creativity for the Czech composer. There were anniversary concerts by the Czech Philharmonic and other musical organizations in Prague. His hometown of Brno awarded him an honorary doctorate and arranged a festival of his music. Other cities in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia also celebrated his music. Festivals by the International Society for Contemporary Music featured his music in Salzburg and, later, in Venice, Frankfurt and Prague. In March, his opera *Jenůfa* was given a memorable production in Berlin under Erich Kleiber. On the very day it opened, the Metropolitan Opera wrote to Janáček promising another production of the same opera in New York City later in the season. *The New York Times* sent its critic Olin Downes to interview the composer. [He is] "white-haired but singularly vigorous," Downes reported, "a very full-blooded personality whose dominant tone is that of fresh idealism and a great pleasure in living."

Janáček was composing with considerable vigour, stimulated by a passionate love affair with Kamila Stösslová, a much younger woman with whom he shared every thought. He was writing a new opera, *The Makropoulos Affair*, and, over the course of the year would hear premières of his opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*, First String Quartet and a new work for wind sextet that promised to be, he wrote to his lover, "a sort of memoir of youth."

On his birthday, July 3, Janáček slipped away from the celebrations in Brno and retreated to Hukvaldy, the village where he was born in the Moravian mountains. There, over a three-week period, he wrote the four-movement sextet for flute doubling piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn and bass clarinet. He called the work *Mládí* ("Youth") and the memories it explores are believed to have been triggered by the research material and memories he had unearthed for a new anniversary monograph that had just been published and for a newspaper story about his nine years as a chorister at St. Augustine's Abbey in Brno. A short march, titled the *March of the Blue-Boys*, was the first composition to result, a few weeks before he began work on the wind sextet. It portrays the choristers in their blue uniforms and is scored for the striking combination of piccolo, snare drum and glockenspiel. Janáček then worked the march into the third movement of the sextet, where the piccolo leads a double-time march which is twice punctuated by a reflective melody of great beauty.

When writing about the septuagenarian composer, Olin Downes commented on Janáček's practice of noting down speech patterns and rhythms while listening to the people around him. His distinctive musical language was directly derived from these observations and resulted in short, repetitive phrases, irregular phrase lengths, and lively rhythms. In *Mládí*, much of the thematic material is related, from one movement to the next. The opening phrase of the first movement echoes the speech patterns of the spoken sigh "Mládí, zlaté Mládí," which translates as "Youth, golden youth." The slow movement has a melancholy Slavic air. If we can believe the words of an anonymous program note in a Brno newspaper of the time, it describes the sad farewells the young composer experienced in the train station at the beginning of each semester at the monastery. The finale begins by recalling the theme of the

opening movement and the connection is made even clearer later as the "Youth, golden youth" sigh is heard once again. That Janáček had positive feelings about his youth is clear from the energy and optimism of the music throughout and from its jubilant ending.

JEAN FRANÇAIX (1912-1997)

Divertissement for oboe, clarinet and bassoon (1947)

Françaix once said that his aim was "to write something that can be called 'Français', with both an 'S' and an 'X', that is, to be cheerful most of the time – even comical." Keeping a French identity and remaining true to himself may have had something to do with him remaining creative till the age of 85. He composed his first piece at the age of six and the fluency remained with him to the end of his life, underlining both the strength and weakness of his art. There was a serious side to his music, but you have to look hard to find it among the five operas, 13 ballets, 30 concerto-type works, three symphonies, volumes of chamber, solo, vocal music – more than 200 works in all. During the Second World War, his colleague Francis Poulenc spoke appreciatively about the distinctive French fingerprint Françaix left on his elegantly neoclassical music. It was an idiom that was to remain with him for the rest of his life.

In 1936, after an ISCM première of Françaix's Concertino for Piano, a German critic wrote: "After so much problematic or laboured music, this Concertino was like fresh water, rushing from a spring with the gracious spontaneity of all that is natural." The four movements of the short *Divertissement* written 11 years later affirm similar qualities. Most of the melodies are given to the oboe in the quietly pastoral opening movement, with its syncopated middle section. The quick, witty second movement continues the sophisticated interplay of the three instruments. There's a gently melancholy feeling to the Elegy, while the finale is whimsical and eclectic by turn, with an abundance of rhythmical ingenuity.

"I composed a 'Reed Trio' (a *Divertissement* for oboe, clarinet and bassoon) which was quite an undertaking," Françaix once wrote of this work. "The smaller the 'Aeolian consort,' the greater the danger of squeezing all the breath out of ones long-suffering performers by expecting them to play impossibly long musical phrases. Dear listeners, I know you may begin to doze off if a piece goes on too long, but my wish is that you should follow the example

of the wise virgins and keep awake during my Trio. I hope you will also spare a kind thought or two for the efforts of my humble servants, the performers. Their talents are easily underestimated, because their sensitive and intelligent artistry appears so perfectly easy and natural . . ."

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)

Septet for wind instruments (1948)

"You know, I've written a lot of music," Paul Hindemith once said to an American composer. "And, you know," he continued, "80 per cent of it is bad."

"Then why did you write it?" he was asked. "Because without the 80 percent," Hindemith replied, "there would never have been the other 20 percent."

Almost a half century after his death, we're still sifting through the prodigious output of the German composer. He wrote at least one work that can be ranked in the top 20 percent category in practically every genre of Western art music. But the days when the name of Hindemith was mentioned in the same breath as those of Bartók, Stravinsky and Schoenberg as one of the four giants of Twentieth century music are gone. With his death in 1963, Hindemith's stock began to slip and much of his music now sits on library shelves.

Hindemith's skills as an all-round musician were phenomenal. He played both violin and viola professionally. He was also a competent performer on more than a dozen other instruments. He liked to boast that he could play every instrument for which he had written a sonata – and he wrote a lot of them. In almost four decades he composed exactly 40 sonatas, the most extensive output of any Twentieth century composer. His four-movement Septet, scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, horn and trumpet, was written after he had fled Nazi Germany and was based in the States. In 1948, three years after the end of the war, during a lecture tour in Europe he took a break in Sicily in late November. There, in a rare acknowledgement that the environment could affect his composing, Hindemith wrote: "In one of the most beautiful gardens imaginable, the sea at your feet, and the snow-covered Mt. Etna in the background . . . this is a place which could only give rise to the very best ideas." He wrote the Septet during the vacation and the following two weeks and conducted the première in Milan at the end of December.

The opening movement, in sonata form, characteristically focuses on the contrapuntal interplay of its three themes rather than on the tone colour of the wind instruments playing them. The slow second and fourth movements are mirror-images of one another, including notes, rhythms, and dynamics. The third movement is a set of variations on a theme in which the interval of a fourth is prominent and which is first presented by the trumpet. The finale is busy triple fugue which is twice dominated by the trumpet playing an old march from Bern, Switzerland.

After Hindemith's Septet received its New York première in 1952, the New York Critic's Circle

announced the piece as the "best chamber work of the season." Hindemith's reactions are not known. But his wife wrote to her husband's publisher in Germany: "The good little *settimo* has suddenly received an unexpected laurel, as the New York critics have selected it as the best chamber work of the year. What the award actually means, we don't know, but congratulations have been pouring in from all sides and the septet is suddenly the talk of all our grocery and meat suppliers, who have promoted us to the ranks of their more important customers."

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Comments welcomed: khnotes@sympatico.ca

Biographies

Harcus Hennigar, a native of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, graduated from the University of Toronto in 1974, studying with Eugene Rittich. Following further study in Czechoslovakia with Frantisek Solc, Hungary with Ferenc Tarjani, and Russia with Vitali Bujanovsky, he became a member of the York Winds, an internationally acclaimed Canadian wind ensemble. In 1979 he won First Prize in the CBC Talent Competition. Harcus has been a member of the Toronto Symphony since 1986, and is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. He is actively involved in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra education programme, presenting solo and small group performances throughout southern Ontario and is a coach with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Kathleen McLean received her musical training at the Curtis Institute of music and has been associate principal bassoon of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 1992. She has participated in many chamber music festivals including the Evian International Festival, Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, Scotia Festival and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. In Toronto, she performs frequently with the New Music Concerts, Amici Ensemble, and the Chamberworks Ensemble. She was principal bassoon with the Canadian Opera Company and has played guest principal bassoon with the NAC Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra UK, and has played in the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra and the Montreal Symphony. She has been soloist with the Calgary Philharmonic and the Saraste Chamber Players. Kathleen has had

the honour of being co-principal bassoon with the World Orchestra of Peace under the baton of Valery Gergiev and has travelled extensively worldwide with the orchestra since 2001. She is a strong advocate of Canadian music and recently commissioned three new works for solo bassoon, harp and strings with Erica Goodman and the Accordes String Quartet for a recording entitled *Nightsongs* released in May 2008. Kathleen has been instructing bassoon since 1986. She was bassoon instructor at the University of Victoria until 1988 and since then has been on faculty at the University of Toronto and the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Joseph Orlowski has been a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 1988. Joseph has acted as Principal clarinetist with the Canadian Opera Company from 2000-2003. During the years 1988 and 2000, Joseph was the Associate Principal Clarinetist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. His previous positions include the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the National Ballet Orchestra. Joseph is active in chamber music throughout Ontario. His performances include the Festival of the Sound, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, the McGill University Chamber Series and solo recitals in northern Ontario. He teaches at the University of Toronto and the Royal Conservatory of Music. Joseph is also a Certified Personal Trainer, focusing on injury prevention and strengthening for professional musicians.

Stephen Pierre has been principal clarinet with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra for the last twenty

years, a position he has also held with the Victoria Symphony. He is an inaugural member of the renowned chamber ensemble, "chamberWORKS!", and has toured extensively throughout Canada, the United States and Great Britain. He has performed frequently as soloist with such orchestras as the Victoria Symphony and the Hamilton Philharmonic. Stephen attended the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and studied with Robert Marcellus of the Cleveland Orchestra and Stan McCartney and Avrahm Galper of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Stephen is currently on the faculties of both the University of Toronto and McMaster University. In addition to his chamber music recordings, he has recorded for CBC, Live Entertainment, and the Solitudes labels.

Clare Scholtz completed her undergraduate music degree as a student of Rhadames Angelucci at the University of Minnesota, studied for several summers with Richard Killmer at the Aspen School of Music, and received her Masters Degree in Performance from the University of Toronto. She was principal oboe of the Saskatoon Symphony for four years, and taught at the University of Saskatchewan. Clare has performed with the National Ballet Orchestra in Toronto, Europe and across Canada, the Toronto Symphony, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Esprit Orchestra, Opera Atelier, Soundstreams, Arraymusic, Continuum, the International Bach Festival with Helmuth Rilling and many other ensembles. In addition, she has been active in commercial performance on both oboe and English horn with musicians such as Ray Charles, Michael Buble and David Foster, film scores and many Broadway shows. Clare is currently Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto teaching applied oboe, music education courses, coordinating woodwind chamber music and is a faculty member at York University teaching oboe.

During the summer months Clare teaches music and collaborative skills at the Conference for Performers in Italy at Università Popolare di Roma and in Canada at the National Music Camp.

Douglas Stewart is Principal Flute in the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and the Esprit Orchestra. He has studied with Albert Horsch, Nick Fiore, Robert Aitken, Marcel Moyse, James Galway, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Julius Baker and Samuel Baron. A First Prize Winner at the CBC Talent Festival, Douglas has appeared as soloist with orchestras across Canada. He teaches at the University of Toronto and has been Visiting Professor at the Freiburg Hochschule of Music in Germany.

Since 1982, **Barton Woomert** has been Associate Principal trumpet with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and trumpet instructor at Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. Prior to moving to Toronto, Barton was Principal Trumpet with the Hamilton (Ontario) Philharmonic and the National Orchestra of Venezuela. A native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he received his music degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Upon graduation from high school, he entered the United States Marine Band, the "President's Own", in Washington, D.C., and performed as soloist for four years in the White House. In addition to performing in the symphony and teaching at the University of Toronto, Barton maintains a busy private trumpet studio and performs as an associate member of the True North Brass. He enjoys a variety of freelance performance opportunities, and when time permits, he pursues a special interest in trumpet and organ repertoire. During the summer, he serves on the music faculties of the Interprovincial Music Camp and the Lancaster County Music Camp of Elizabethtown College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

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